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TREASURY FOR OFAC BARBARA HAMMERLE AND ANDREAS MORGNER
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 6/28/2016

TAGS: [ECON](#) [EAIR](#) [ETTC](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [SOCI](#) [KCRM](#) [LI](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: IRBIS FOLLOW-UP - SHARJAH, RAS AL-KHAIMAH, AND FUJAIRAH

REF: A. ABU DHABI 00715, B. DUBAI 03675

CLASSIFIED BY: Jillian L. Burns, Acting Consul General, Dubai, UAE.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. SUMMARY: (C) Poleconoff met with the directors of Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah (RAK), and Fujairah airports in June to follow-up on the closure of Irbis and other UN designated operations belonging to Viktor Bout. Sharjah and RAK airport directors gave assurances that all of Bout's operations had been shut down by order of the UAEG. Fujairah airport's director did not believe Bout or any of his companies had ever operated out of his airport. An aircraft belonging to one of Bout's companies is abandoned at RAK airport. End Summary.

12. (C) Poleconoff met with the directors of Ras al-Khaimah (RAK), Sharjah, and Fujairah airports during mid-June to try to verify that there were no ongoing operations of UN designated companies Irbis, Airbus, or Prilom, or any companies belonging to Viktor Bout (ref A). All of the airport directors stated that they follow the regulations of the UAEG's General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) and if the GCAA orders a company shut, the order is carried out immediately.

Ras al-Khaimah Airport

3.(C) Mohamed S. al-Khadar, Director of Civil Aviation for Ras al-Khaimah stated in a June 19 meeting that all of Bout's operations were shut down as soon as the GCAA gave the order. Al-Khadar commented that the GCAA sent him a list of 11 banned companies earlier in the year (nfi).

4.(C) Bout's main operation at RAK was Wing Air Services, an aviation maintenance company. Wing Air Services shut down in 2002 and has no presence at RAK airport. Al-Khadar also believed that Phoenix Aviation had been related to Viktor Bout. Phoenix changed its name but then stopped operating at RAK before the GCAA sent out its circular. (Note: al-Khadar did not indicate the new name Phoenix used.)

5.(S/NF) Al-Khadar stated that over the past few years he had a number of meetings with British intelligence officers and provided them detailed information on various companies operating at RAK airport, including some of Bout's companies.

16. (C) Al-Khadar mentioned that a Gulfstream G-1 parked at RAK airport had been abandoned by one of Viktor Bout's companies more than two years ago. The airport authority had been unsuccessful in its attempts to contact the registered owner to have the aircraft removed.

Sharjah Airport

7.(C) Dr. Ghanem al-Hajri, the director general of Sharjah's Department of Civil Aviation and Sharjah Airport Authority confirmed during a June 20 meeting that Irbis' operation at Sharjah airport had been shut down. Al-Hajiri commented that Irbis had operated at both Sharjah airport and in the Sharjah Airport International Free Zone (ref B), but he was sure that Irbis no longer operated in either location.

8.(C) When asked about Sharjah airport's website still listing Irbis as a non-scheduled carrier serving Sharjah, al-Hajri replied that he was unaware of the website listing. He did add that the airport is bound to allow any aircraft registered in an International Air Transport Association (IATA) contracting country to land at Sharjah, provided the GCAA authorizes entry into UAE airspace.

Fujairah Airport

9.(C) During a June 26 meeting, Dr. Khaled al-Mazroui, the general manager of Fujairah airport stated that he was not familiar with Viktor Bout or with Irbis, Airbus, or Prilom. He added that Fujairah airport had received a circular from the GCAA banning 5 or 6 companies (nfi). The only banned companies he knew of were shut down for regulatory and safety violations. GCAA had permitted at least one company to resume operation after it had corrected its deficiencies (nfi). Al-Mazroui added that it is the GCAA and not the airports that enforce any bans. Since the GCAA prohibits banned carriers from entering UAE airspace, there is little the airports need do, other than ensure that a banned company's offices are closed.

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